Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 2003 – 2004

Information Technology Office

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Annual Report 2003 – 2004

Information Technology Office

for the fiscal year ending
March 31, 2004

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The Honourable Andrew Thomson
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

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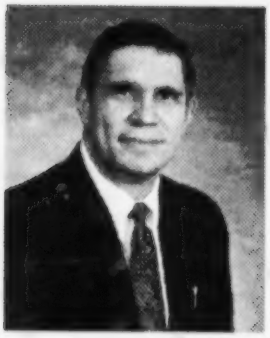
Table of Contents

Letter of Transmittal from the Minister Responsible for Information Technology 3
Letter of Transmittal from the Chief Information and Services Officer 3
Who We Are 4
Clients 4
Services 4
Our Vision 5
Our Goals 5
IT Restructuring
Priorities 6
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 6
CommunityNet
Priorities 6
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 7
Privacy
Priorities 7
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 7
Information Management
Priorities 8
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 8
Security
Priorities 8
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 8
Government On-Line
Priorities 9
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 9
Office of Geomatics Coordination
Priorities 10
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 10
Government of Saskatchewan Web Portal
Priorities 10
2003 – 2004 Accomplishments 11
Department Financial Overview 12
Trends and Issues
Overview 13
Information Management 13
Technology 13
IT Organization Trends 13
Citizen Services 14
2004 – 2005 Budget Overview 14
Who to call for further information 15
Appendix
Organizational Chart, Information Technology Office, March 31, 2004 16

Letters of Transmittal



Her Honour
The Honourable Dr. Lynda M. Haverstock
Lieutenant Governor
Province of Saskatchewan

May it Please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of the Information Technology Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004

Andrew Thomson
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

The Honourable Andrew Thomson
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Dear Sir:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Information Technology Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

John Law
Chief Information and Services Officer

Who We Are

Operating under the leadership of the Chief Information and Services Officer for Saskatchewan, the Information Technology Office (ITO) establishes and coordinates policies and programs that use information management (IM) and information technology (IT) to enhance public access, strengthen the government's ability to undertake electronic service delivery, and enable electronic commerce throughout the province.

In 2002 – 2003, the ITO became a stand alone government agency headed by a Chief Information and Services Officer. The changes reflect government's priority of service delivery to citizens, rather than just the IT infrastructure needed to deliver those services. This is a recognition of the importance of IT and IM to the province's future economic success in an ever increasing wired world and the new knowledge economy.

The ITO works with government departments and agencies to create enterprise-wide services and standards to optimize both the efficiency and effectiveness of executive government expenditures on IT. It also works with key partners to give citizens streamlined service options from a variety of channels, including Web portals, service centres and inquiry lines.

The office's 22 staff work with government, community and private partners on initiatives aimed at ensuring Saskatchewan people take full advantage of what the IT revolution has to offer. For example, the ITO was the lead agency on CommunityNet, which is providing high-speed Internet and improved access to on-line data resources to every school, health care facility, library and government office in the province.

CommunityNet has also provided the impetus for Crown-owned SaskTel to expand its commercial high-speed Internet service to businesses and individuals throughout Saskatchewan. CommunityNet now serves 74 per cent of citizens in Saskatchewan.

The office also works with internal government clients on implementing more efficient and cost-effective ways of sharing information and providing services to the public. This includes key on-line services available to the public via the Internet, as well as consolidation and development of internal systems that enable government departments to work together more efficiently to the benefit of both themselves and their public clients.

Clients

The majority of the ITO's clients at this time are internal government departments and agencies. The exceptions are the CommunityNet and Government of Saskatchewan Central Web Portal branches, which deal on a daily basis with external organizations such as the educational and health care communities, and the general public. However, the office is beginning to take on an expanded role as a liaison to the private sector IT community.

Services

- Provides strategic direction and advice to Cabinet, government departments and agencies in the areas of IT, IM, security, privacy and Web-based service delivery.
- Coordinates government-wide IT and IM initiatives.
- Provides advice and support to external CommunityNet clients, such as the educational and health care sectors.
- Coordinates the response to public requests for government information and services received via the Government of Saskatchewan Central Web Portal.

Our Vision

"Using technology to help government serve people"

The vision for the ITO addresses these needs:

1. To provide seamless, automated, single window service delivery for citizens regardless of location;

2. To use IT and IM techniques in augmenting the productivity/efficiency of government operations.

Our Goals

The ITO goals and priorities address the major components of government business:

- Who we serve;
- How we do business, and;
- How we manage our resources.

IT Restructuring

In 2003, the ITO continued to develop plans to restructure IT in a way that would meet government's objective of actively managing the corporate IT agenda to meet service delivery commitments.

The ITO consulted with senior decision-makers and industry leaders to ensure that IT services would meet the business goals of government. In addition, the Gartner Group was engaged to assess the state of government-wide IT operations and to provide recommendations on potential improvements based on industry best practices.

The ITO will continue to lead the government-wide restructuring and rationalizing of IT services, including governance, enterprise architecture (or blueprint), procurement, IT infrastructure, information management and security.

Priorities

- Complete a multi-year strategic plan to address government's objectives.
- Establish performance measures and report progress by March 31, 2005.

2003-04 Accomplishments

- Engaged senior decision-makers and departments in development of the *Gartner Report on IT Services Transformation.*
- Worked with departments to collect, analyze, validate and summarize background information on IT infrastructure and applications, including Help Desk, desktop services, mainframes and other hardware, and application development.
- Commenced work on a strategic plan to restructure IT to provide better delivery of services and cost savings and other efficiencies.

CommunityNet

CommunityNet is Saskatchewan's shared, secure public-sector province-wide data network that:

- Connects K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions in the province.
  - high-speed Internet access
  - no usage charges (flat rate)
  - distance education applications
- Connects health care facilities in the province.
  - telemedicine, remote diagnostics, access to specialists on-line
  - secure, confidential access to patient information
- Connects government offices.
  - expand ability to deliver e-government services
  - share data, applications and resources
- Connects public libraries.
  - extend Internet services to citizens who may not otherwise have the skills or the financial ability to obtain the necessary computer equipment
  - access to province-wide library services on-line
- Provides external connectivity to private sector enterprises.
- Provides the critical mass to rationalize advancing infrastructure in rural Saskatchewan.
- Extends social, educational and economic opportunities to even the smallest Saskatchewan communities.

Priorities

- Planning and introduction of CommunityNet II, a wireless expansion of CommunityNet which will provide high-speed Internet access to a minimum of 71 southern communities and their surrounding areas.

- CommunityNet II is intended to:
  - Provide access to rural businesses, farmers, and northern and First Nation communities where access today is limited;
  - Expand the current coverage area of CommunityNet from 74 per cent of the population to 86 per cent of the population by providing service to additional communities; and,
  - Replace a large portion of the satellite services that were installed in 185 First Nation and remote rural schools as an interim measure until broadband could be expanded.

- CommunityNet II is also intended to complete deployment for provincial public libraries.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- All 795 Saskatchewan schools have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 650 schools connected in 2002 – 2003.

- All 85 First Nations schools in the province have been connected to CommunityNet.

- All 30 regional colleges and post-secondary institutions have been connected to CommunityNet.

- All 310 health facilities have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 300 health care facilities connected in 2002 – 2003.

- All 256 government offices have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 235 government offices connected in 2002 – 2003.

- 154 of 162 provincial public libraries have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 30 provincial public libraries connected in 2002 – 2003.

- CommunityNet is available in 366 communities.

- SaskTel offers commercial high-speed Internet service in 237 communities, up from 146 communities in 2002 – 2003.

Privacy

The ITO's work on privacy issues is an important supporting piece to its other initiatives, particularly IM and IT security. Privacy is an integral part of encouraging citizen use of on-line services. The public must have confidence in the government's ability to handle their information.

Priorities

- Facilitate the development and implementation of stringent, workable privacy standards and policies for all government departments and agencies.

- Ensure the safety and privacy of all information collected and generated by government, especially information related to its dealings with citizens.

- Encourage the use of on-line government services by instilling public confidence in the way their information is managed and stored.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- Assisted in developing a privacy framework for Executive Government.

- Led the development of a Saskatchewan information classification system based on a national model document. This system is to be used to place all Government information into one of four security levels.

Information Management

Information management refers to a comprehensive approach to standards, best practices and policies that ensure the information that government creates, collects and delivers is organized and preserved consistently across departments. Government-wide IM policies and

best practices support a citizen-centred, collaborative approach to government, with appropriate security and privacy measures in place to protect information.

Priorities

- Develop an enterprise-wide approach to the lifecycle of information that maintains public trust by ensuring that essential records of government are protected and managed in a secure environment.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- Continued to develop and expand the Government of Saskatchewan Thesaurus, a common vocabulary for describing government information at the point of creation. A directory, or Thesaurus, of standardized terms assists in preserving and locating information produced by government.

- Coordinated the development of a Web-enabled Publications Centre. This centre, which is in the prototype stage, will function as a central repository of all information produced by government, ensuring the preservation and continued access to key government information.

Security

The ITO establishes and coordinates security policies that pertain to IT initiatives and systems. The policies ensure that government information and information collected by government from citizens and clients is stored in a safe and secure manner, accessible only by authorized personnel.

Priorities

- Implement government-wide IT security policies.

- Provide one-on-one security advice to departments and agencies on internal security policies and standards.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- Developed a government-wide IT Security Policy that outlines the necessary security disciplines and standards.

- Developed an IT Security Threat Posture that provides the government with the ability to move to a higher level of security if and when necessary.

- Established a government-wide Computer Security Incident Handling Team that gives incidence response cababilities to the government of Saskatchewan and participating agencies on CommunityNet.

- Developed a tool to enable government to respond to IT threats in a coordinated, measured and prudent fashion.

- Assisted the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation with the policies for disposal of surplus computers and security clauses for outsourcing agreements. .

Government On-Line

In the fall of 2000, the government released *A Strategic Plan for E-Government in the Digital Economy.* This broad initiative enhanced services to citizens by making government services available electronically, allowing citizens to access them from wherever they might live and at the time of their choosing. The plan set out two government-wide targets:

- All paper-based forms used by the Provincial Government to be available on-line by 2002; and

- Ninety per cent of all transactions (volume based) between the Provincial Government and Saskatchewan citizens to be available on-line by 2004.

The ITO administers the Government On-Line (GOL) Fund that assists departments in achieving government-wide targets. The office oversees the preparation of proposals, development and selection of projects, and financial administration of agreements and funding for approved projects.

The resulting benefits of the funding and department cooperation can be seen in a number of successful projects. In the past three years, over fifty new or expanded on-line services have been developed with the volume of on-line transactions between government and the public continuing to grow as services evolve.

In light of the success of moving to target, and due to pressures for funding to be spent in more strategic ways, 2003 – 04 funding was restricted to only department projects that were in a final year of development, and that had been part of the GOL process since year one. In addition, new provincial initiatives were undertaken that would enhance services to the province. Key initiatives were:

- **The Learning Village Pilot,** which builds upon Phase I of CommunityNet and demonstrates government's ability to go beyond time and distance constraints to serve people, provides an example of how technology can expand and enhance the learning experience;

- **The Business Registration project,** which partners the Information Technology Office (ITO) with Industry and Resources, Justice, Worker's Compensation Board, and the Canada Revenue Agency to improve business registration in the province; and,

- **CommunityNet II,** which expands high-speed Internet services to additional areas of the province.

Priorities

- Make government processes more efficient through automation and/or transformation of services.
- Provide leadership in the development of better access to services for rural and remote communities.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- Met performance targets by March 31, 2004. For example, print forms are now available on-line through the Publications Centre and 90 per cent of all transactions between government and Saskatchewan citizens are available through on-line channels.

- Administered the GOL Fund that supports departments in the development and enhancement of electronic service delivery.

- Promoted on-line services as an opportunity to use information and technology to provide new services to citizens of Saskatchewan, no matter where they live.

- Accomplished cross-departmental projects that deliver one-stop access for citizens to services and publications.

Office of Geomatics Coordination

In 2003, geomatics public policy and coordination functions were transferred from the Information Services Corporation (ISC) to the ITO. This new Office of Geomatics Coordination (OGC) coordinates, promotes and facilitates the development, effective use, and sharing of geographic information. This includes mapping, surveying, geographic information systems (GIS), satellite imagery, and satellite position fixing (GPS).

Priorities

- Provide leadership and coordination to facilitate effective use and sharing of geomatics data with an enterprise-wide view of geomatics.

- Coordinate geomatics services to facilitate the development of new projects, partnerships, and the geomatics industry.

- Oversee geomatics projects proposed by departments/agencies, ISC and any other parties.

- Provide support to departments/agencies, and others managing geomatics-related initiatives through the provision of best practices and technology advice.

- Develop and administer the geomatics service agreements with ISC for the provision of geomatics products and services.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- Transferred policy leadership responsibilities and resources from ISC to executive government.

- Established the funding, governance framework, and policy-related directions for geomatics.

- Defined version 1 of the base map of Saskatchewan.

- Established a mechanism for stakeholder funding of standard base map products/services from ISC.

- Approved a federal/provincial geomatics accord.

- Initiated web-enabling projects for cadastral (real property mapping) and environmental areas.

Government of Saskatchewan Web Portal

The ITO has responsibility for the management and daily operation of the Government of Saskatchewan's Central Web Portal. The main purpose of the portal is to serve as the public's first entry point to the on-line services and information of individual government departments and agencies. It also serves as a promotional tool for the province, provides access to frequently requested information or public informational items of an urgent nature, and provides a central contact point for public requests for information or services.

Priorities

- Collaborate with executive government departments and agencies to provide and maintain an effective on-line tool for supplying quick, easy public access to government services and information.

- Research and monitor emerging Web technology developments and user demands to ensure government on-line initiatives are delivered in the most effective way possible.

- Provide professional advice to other provincial government agencies to support forward-thinking approaches to government Web technology initiatives.

- Provide effective and efficient public service by coordinating quick response to public requests for information or services.

- Position the Central Web Portal as the public's first point of contact for on-line government information and services.

- Provide one-stop access to major government publications, forms and other information by working with the Queen's Printer to integrate the Publications Centre with the Central Web Portal.

2003 – 2004 Accomplishments

- Improved the search function of the Central Web Portal, providing users with the option of looking for information using a "key word" thesaurus.

- Leveraged the Central Web Portal's database structure to assist the Publications Centre development. Standard protocols allow the two applications to share data

without duplication of effort and expand the content available to users.

- Maintained the Central Web Portal on a daily basis to ensure its accuracy and timeliness.

- Consulted and advised other government departments and agencies on Web related issues, including development, maintenance, policies and standards.

- Answered or coordinated the response to 4,085 public requests received through the Central Web Portal for government information or services.

- Attracted more than 2.8 million users to the site, compared to just over 2 million in the previous year of operation, an increase of more than 40 per cent.

Department Financial Overview

Information Technology Office Financial Overview 2003 – 2004

	2003 – 2004 Budget ($thousands)	2003 – 2004 Actuals ($thousands)
Administration and IT Initiatives	2,351	1,919[1]
Government On-line	3,014	1,170[2]
TOTAL	**5,365**	**3,089**

Variance explanations

1. Administration costs were lower than budgeted due to the fact that several FTEs were vacant during the fiscal year, and due to expenditure restraint.

2. Expenditures of the GOL program were lower than budgeted due to the fact that $2.0 million was set aside to fund CommunityNet expansion in 2004 – 05. Subsequently, those funds were frozen due to expenditure restraint.

Trends and Issues

Overview

As one of the most "connected" jurisdictions in the world, Saskatchewan has an excellent opportunity to take advantage of what new information technologies can do for our economic and social well being. The province has already made important strides in e-learning and on-line government services, while many of its businesses are developing e-commerce options in order to expand and diversify.

The ITO has commenced work on a performance plan for 2004 – 2005 as the next step in working together to build on the progress that has been made. The plan will be flexible and designed to evolve over time.

This annual report summarizes the ITO's priorities and accomplishments to date. Changes can be expected as the office takes on more responsibility and becomes more directly involved in IT issues both within and outside of government.

Information Management

Until 10 years ago, government was a paper-based organization. With the move to an electronic environment, there has been a rapid growth in the volume of information generated. Departments now must file, track, make available and preserve a combination of paper and electronic records. They often view the processes required to manage the various formats as separate functions. This results in significant duplication of information as many agencies maintain records in several formats to suit their own purposes. As well, inter and intra-agency sharing of records is a task complicated by policies that restrict access to decision-making information.

A shared view of what public servants need to know about managing information, the nature of IM, and the skills and abilities required to build and maintain an IM infrastructure, has yet to be entrenched. Training, education, and recruitment programs for public servants need to more strongly reflect IM considerations, especially at the senior levels. Demographics suggest that valuable information and knowledge could be lost as public servants retire or change jobs. Champions are needed for the development of a government-wide IM community.

Technology

The current technical environment in executive government consists of a collection of de-centralized and distributed networks of information and applications specific to each government agency. This approach evolved primarily in the 1980's as IT moved from a traditional mainframe environment towards a distributed computing environment using personal computers and focusing on desktop applications that were designed based on a departmental, branch or program perspective.

Often, these systems were not designed to inter-connect or inter-operate. Any standards in place are at an individual departmental level. Security firewalls are also in place that prevent easy access to information by staff within the same department. This makes data sharing with staff from other departments difficult if not impossible. The ITO is working with all departments to facilitate the sharing of information across government.

A province-wide network known as CommunityNet has been implemented. This is an initiative that provides a high-speed network connection among all government offices, schools, health facilities and libraries throughout the province. In the past year, government has announced plans to expand the network to provide access to a greater number of Saskatchewan residents and businesses.

IT Organization Trends

The challenges posed by IT operations are not unique to Saskatchewan. Governments in the United States and Canada are faced with similar IT environments that do not adequately support the objective of providing services to citizens. Thus most local, state, provincial and federal

governments are in the process of moving towards the best practices of international experience and are restructuring IT to operationalize service delivery.

Several provinces, including Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia have moved to a shared support services model, in which IT is one of the service lines that may also include human resources, corporate accounting, accommodations, procurement and supply services.

IT restructuring generally involves consolidation, rationalization and standardization of IT services, processes and products. Typically, IT plans range from two to six years to accomplish objectives. IT restructuring is designed to mitigate the costliness, inefficiencies, and other barriers to business and service objectives. Further, it generally enables departments to concentrate on core business rather than the IT employed to deliver that business.

Following best practices, typical plans set common, measurable standards for hardware, software, information and services; establish governance and accountability; achieve efficiencies, economies of scale, and cost savings; and provide seamless service to citizens.

Services to Citizens

Electronic delivery of programs and services has become the preferred method of governments around the world to connect with citizens. In Saskatchewan, this method enhances the reach of government to rural and remote areas not served by government offices. Freelaw (on-line legislation), the Saskatchewan Electronic Tax Service, and the Hunting and Fishing License Service are well used and promoted.

However, these services and others are presented to the public not from a central service perspective, but through the central government Web portal as links to departments, agencies and Crown corporations that offer electronic services from their own websites. The ITO is working with departments to develop shared service delivery initiatives such as bundling of services that provide seamless single-entry interaction and access to government programs. A fully developed electronic service centre approach must also recognize the value to citizens and businesses of linking to services offered by other levels of government.

As important as electronic services are, not all citizens and businesses can or wish to access services on-line. Telephone services and personal contacts at regional service centres or with public servants must be promoted and supported as indispensable methods for reaching the government.

2004 – 2005 Budget Overview

Operating Expenditures for the ITO will be $2,609,000 in 2004 – 2005. Office funding supports the adoption of technologies and IM practices that enable government departments and agencies to provide on-line services more efficiently and effectively to the citizens of Saskatchewan and other external clients. It also supports the adoption of policies that enable departments to work together in a more efficient manner, and to offer services with the full security and privacy measures the public expects when their private information is involved.

The table below breaks down the estimated planned expenditure for the ITO.

2004 – 2005 ITO Budget
(in thousands of dollars)

Administration	476
Accommodation and Central Services	156
Information Management and Technology Initiatives	1,977
Total	2,609

Who to call for further information

If you have any questions or comments, or would like additional copies of this report, we invite you to call:

Information Technology Office
(306) 787-8880

or visit our Web site:
http://www.ito.gov.sk.ca

or email: inquiries@ito.gov.sk.ca

Appendix

Organization Chart

ITO

March 31, 2003